

Things to Know About Counteroffers

Counteroffer Acceptance

(The Road to Career Ruin!)

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“Many a dangerous temptation comes to us in fine gay colours that are but skin deep.”

What the fine 17th-century writer, Matthew Henry, was referring to when he wrote these words can only be speculated at today. However, the same words can be used for counteroffers – those enticements from your current employer to get you to stay after you have announced that you are resigning to take another job.

The reality is that when someone quits his or her current position to take another, it is often perceived as a direct reflection on the boss. Unless you are really incompetent or a thorn in his side, the boss might be perceived to look bad by “allowing” you to leave. Human nature is such that the boss might react by doing whatever needs to be done to keep you from leaving – until he or she is ready for you to leave.

It is also human nature to want to stay unless your work life or working conditions cause you some level of misery. Career changes, like all other ventures into the unfamiliar, are tough. That is why bosses know they can usually keep you around by pressing the right buttons.

Interviews with employers who make counteroffers, and employees who accept them, have shown that as tempting as they may be, acceptance may result in what is effectively, career suicide. Over the past several decades, collected data and wisdom clearly shows that only in isolated incidents has the acceptance of a counteroffer benefited the employee.

Before you are tempted to succumb to an ego gratifying counteroffer, please take time to consider some universal truths:

- Any situation, in which an employee is forced to get an outside offer before the present employer will suggest a raise, promotion, or better working conditions, is suspect.
- No matter what the company says when making its counteroffer, you will always be considered a fidelity risk going forward. Having once demonstrated your lack of loyalty and commitment (whatever the reason), you will lose your status as a “team player” and your place in the inner circle.
- Your reasons for wanting to leave still exist. Conditions are just made a bit more compelling in the short term because of the raise, the promotion, or the promises made to retain you.
- Counteroffers are only made in response to a threat to quit. Will you have to solicit an offer and threaten to quit each time you deserve a raise, promotion, or better working conditions?

- Decent and well-managed companies **DO NOT** make counteroffers. ...**EVER!** Their policies are fair and equitable. They will not be subjected to “counteroffer coercion” or what they perceive as blackmail.

If the urge to accept a counteroffer overcomes you, keep on cleaning out your desk as you count your blessings!